

'JOAN THE WOMAN,' WITH MISS FARRAR, MARKS FILM EPOCH

Carries Audience Back to Days
of Old When Men Died
for an Idea.

VIVID SCREEN STORY.

Every Detail Made to Seem
Real in Heroic Picture of
Girl Martyr.

By Sophie Irene Loeb.

For days after I saw it I reflected that if I could produce a play like "Joan the Woman"—well, what's the use of wishing? There is only one Cecil De Mille.

I am glad at least that two of my sex played their big part in this production—Janie McPherson, the author, and Geraldine Farrar, the star. It is not a production—it is an inspiration. It is not an event, but an epoch in the motion picture industry. I wrote Cecil De Mille a letter about it—the first I have ever written about any photoplay, and I have seen them all, all the big ones. And because of what I found in this play I asked to write this article.

I have travelled in many countries and am not easily thrilled. Yet, as I sat entranced during the showing of this picture, I wondered how it was possible to produce such a finished work, having such keen faithfulness to detail, without losing for an instant the grasp of the whole. Every scene must have called forth profound study and infinite care.

It is the one unusual piece of work that will make an appeal to every class and every creed. In it I saw a plea, a call to womanhood and a cry to manhood. In it I found that there comes a time in the life of many a woman when it is greater to renounce the thing nearest to the heart's desire and go forth to a braver battle for the things that endure for all time. In it I realized how great deeds of history thunder through all time and inspire youth to brave death in the cause of his fellows.

In this play I came to understand the great love of a great woman, the joy and gladness it brought to her

even though its period was fleeting, and how at last it shone forth in all its truth and beauty before her tired, death-glazed eyes.

TAKEN BACK IN FANCY TO
DAYS OF OLD.

In this picture I found myself actually living in the days when pumed knights were willing to die for the honor of their ladies, and when women took death in the flames rather than give the lie to their convictions.

I have seen pictures, paintings, of all of these scenes, depicting the lives and deaths of famous persons of the past; but by the widest scope of imagination I could not have dreamed of the vividness of valor, the loyalty of love, the sacrificing of self, the art of achievement, the wonder of womanhood, the misunderstanding of the martyr, as is set forth in the almost living reality of "Joan the Woman."

In a word, I returned home not, as usual, with images, but with ideas. And at last, wonder of wonders! I had seen a play where lovers—great lovers—did not finish the play in a "close-up" kiss. In fact, they never kissed, but remained true and gloried in their love, though it was never consummated.

In this play's action mobs are real maddened men and women—not over-rehearsed automaton puppets; and the battles make you gasp for breath as hundreds of horses go tramping through lines of men before your very eyes. When you "come to" you wonder how many had been killed when the camera man was called off. There is only one thing that I hold against it. I am jealous of Geraldine Farrar, jealous for the poor girl with great talent who does not get the chance to play such a part. This is how I told it to Cecil De Mille:

"When I saw your first Farrar picture I wanted to flash across to you, 'For Heaven's sake, Mr. De Mille, you

don't need Geraldine Farrar to emphasize your art.' I say it now. I agree with you, however, that in this play she is an artist."

"Yet I still hold that if an unknown girl had played that part last night your picture would have been enhanced in value, and lived longer. Perhaps this would be difficult to explain to you. AGREE WITH BARD THAT THE PLAY'S THE THING."

"You may say the play was made for Geraldine Farrar, but you can't tell me that Geraldine Farrar was made for the play."

"Of course you will not agree with me about this star business. I maintain, however, that the public is easily educated. If you persist in putting on Farrars and Castles simply because a fortune has been spent in advertising them in another art, the public will go to see them on the screen out of curiosity."

"You will get away with this for a time—as long, perhaps, as you want to spend the money. But if you want people to go home with your picture, which they will do in spite of you and which makes me want to see De Mille pictures, you can make your public want your art instead of your artist."

"The Bard was right. The play's the thing. 'Would Shakespeare have had Irene Castle play Fortia because she had been tripping to the tune of thousands of dollars per week?'

"I know what your answer is: 'But Farrar is an artist, and she helped make "Joan the Woman."'

"But I answered 'Joan the Woman' came first. 'You are hiding your own light under an evening star. Let them proceed in the orbit in which they started. Occasionally you may get a comet that sparkles everywhere like Farrar. But

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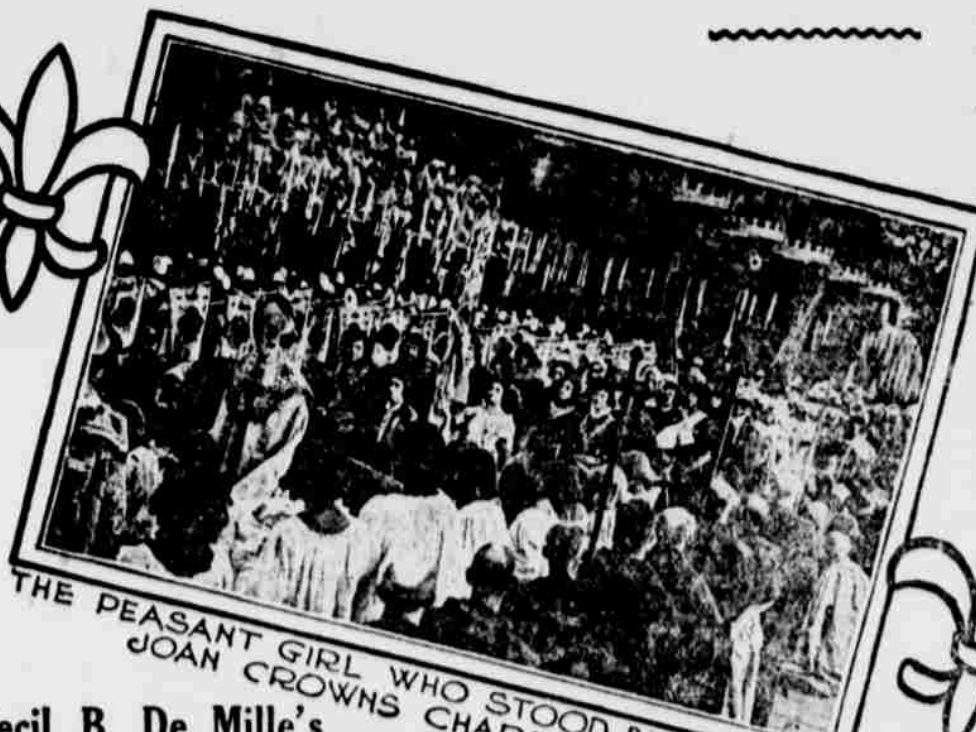
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